

BLACK DIAMOND
WESTERN



10¢



BLACK DIAMOND WESTERN

FEB.
NO. 54

LEV GLEASON, Editor and Publisher



DON'T REACH FOR THAT GUN, SHERIFF! I WARNED YOU!

BLACK DIAMOND. WHAT MADE YUH TURN OWLHOOT?

WANTED FOR MURDER!

SHERIFF BEN DAWSON



BLACK DIAMOND



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WANTED: BLACK DIAMOND



IT WAS AS UNBELIEVABLE AS A NIGHTMARE... BUT THE BLACK DIAMOND HAD A PRICE ON HIS HEAD! THE WILD WEST'S FOREMOST FIGHTER AGAINST INJUSTICE HAD TURNED CRIMINAL AND KILLER! HE HAD MURDERED INNOCENT PEOPLE IN COLD BLOOD—DEFIED THE LAW HE'D SWORN TO UPHOLD—AND TAKEN AN OATH OF ENMITY AGAINST THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE! CLEARLY THE BLACK DIAMOND HAD GONE MAD—FOR WHY ELSE WOULD LAWMEN PURSUE HIM DAY AND NIGHT? WHY ELSE WOULD THE LURID POSTER SCREAM...

WANTED: BLACK DIAMOND?!!

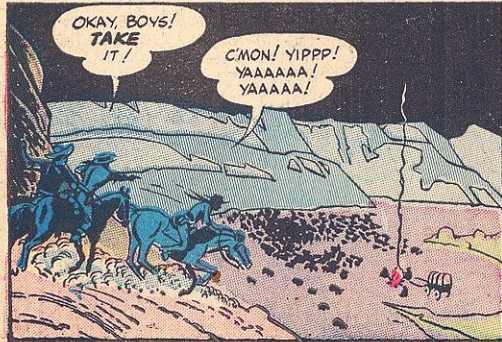
BOSS! WE WERE SAFE! WHY'D YUH TURN AROUND FER?

BECAUSE THE BLACK DIAMOND'S GUN IS EMPTY!! BEFORE HE RELOADS I'M GOIN' TO SQUASH THE MEDDLIN' FOOL INTO THE PRAIRIE!



IT IS EVENING IN CARIBE COUNTY. THE MOON LOOKS DOWN GOLDLY UPON A BAND OF RIDERS EMERGING FROM THE WOODS...

NEAR THE CHUCKWAGON, A LEAN, BLACK-CLAD FIGURE TENSES...



OKAY, BOYS!
TAKE
IT!

C'MON! YIPPP!
YAAAAAA!
YAAAAA!



BANG!
BANG!

WHAT IN TARNATION IS THAT?

IT'S THE OWLHOOT I'VE BEEN TELLIN' YUH ABOUT, BLACK DIAMOND! THEY BEEN RAIDIN' US RANCHERS EVERY NIGHT, RUSTLIN' US BLIND. THEY ARE BACK AGAIN, CUSS 'EM!



THE SICK EGG DOGS! THEY AIN'T LEFT US ALONE FOR A MINUTE! BUT I'LL SHOW 'EM. NOBODY'S GOIN' TO STRIP MY RANCH BARE! I WORKED TOO LONG TOO HARD TO PUT IT TOGETHER.

UNCLE JIM! WAIT! THEY'LL TAKE A SHOT AT YOU!



IT'S THE OLD GEEZER HIMSELF! BLAST HIM!

IIIIIEE!

BANG! BANG!



THE POLECATS! THEY SAW US COMING AND VAMMOSED! HOW'S UNCLE JIM?

HE'S DEAD BUMPER! THE RATS NEVER GAVE HIM A CHANCE! BUT THEY WON'T GET AWAY! ONE OF 'EM LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND! A HOOFP-PRINT! A CROOKED SHOE! ZIG-ZAG SHAPED! I'LL FIND THE RIDER IF IT TAKES THE REST OF MY LIFE.

THE FOLLOWING DAY ON BOOT HILL...



DID YOU SEE THE SHERIFF, BLACK DIAMOND?

I SAW HIM... AND WHAT I SAW I DIDN'T LIKE! THE LAW IN THIS COUNTY IS A JOKE! BUT ONLY THE SHERIFF IS LAUGHING! YOU KNOW WHO I SPOTTED AS HIS DEPUTIES? FIVE OF THE MOST WANTED KILLERS IN THE WEST.



CARIBE COUNTY IS AS CORRUPT AS THEY COME! IT'S PRACTICALLY A REFUGE FOR EVERY OUTLAW GANG ON THE FRONTIER.

AND YOUR JURISDICTION MEANS NOTHING IN THIS COUNTY. A NICE FIX, F.



THE RANCHERS TOLD ME THAT CHUCK DEERING AND HIS GANG ARE HIDING OUT SOMEWHERE IN CARIBE COUNTY. THEY FIGURE DEERING'S DOING THE RUSTLING... BUT ALL PLEAS TO SHERIFF HINTON FALL ON DEAF EARS.

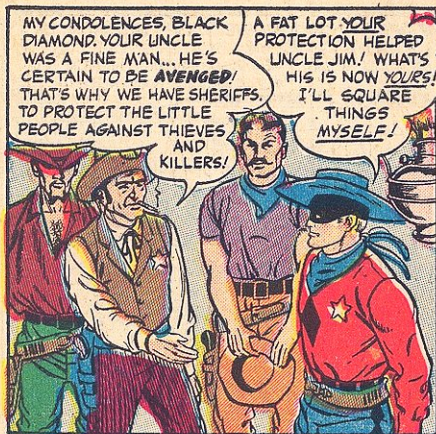
MAYBE HINTON'S BEING CUT IN! WHY ELSE WOULD HE GIVE COMFORT TO DEERING?

THE FOLLOWING DAY, AS JIM GARRISON'S BANKRUPT RANCH IS PUT UP FOR SALE...



DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS, BLACK DIAMOND? SHERIFF HINTON BOUGHT THE RANCH FOR A SONG!

IT'S JUST THE LATEST IN A LONG LIST OF PROPERTY THEFTS! HINTON IS NOT ONLY THE MOST CROOKED AND POWERFUL MAN IN THE COUNTY BUT THE RICHEST!



MY CONDOLENCES, BLACK DIAMOND, YOUR UNCLE WAS A FINE MAN... HE'S CERTAIN TO BE AVENGED! THAT'S WHY WE HAVE SHERIFFS, TO PROTECT THE LITTLE PEOPLE AGAINST THIEVES AND KILLERS!

A FAT LOT YOUR PROTECTION HELPED UNCLE JIM! WHAT'S HIS IS NOW *YOURS!* I'LL SQUARE THINGS MYSELF!



HOLD ON, BLACK DIAMOND! I'M THE LAW AROUND HERE! YOUR STAR AIN'T WORTH THE TIN IT'S MADE OF! SO DON'T MAKE TROUBLE! IF ANY VARMINTS ARE GONNA BE CAUGHT, I'LL CATCH 'EM! YOU BUTT OUT!

LIKE BLAZES! I KNOW WHO I'M AFTER, AND I'M GOING TO GET 'EM! C'MON, BUMPER!

A FEW DAYS LATER, IN CARIBE CITY, THE BLACK DIAMOND FINDS WHAT HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR!

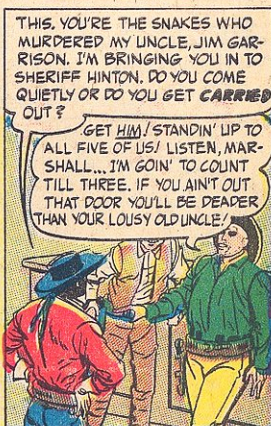


A CROOKED, ZIG-ZAG SHAPED HOOF-PRINT! THE OWLHOOTS WHO RAIDED UNCLE JIM MUST BE INSIDE, DRINKING! LET'S GO BUMPER!



WHO OWNS THAT MILK-FACED PINTO OUTSIDE?

I DO! WHAT'S IT TO YOU, TIN STAR?



THIS, YOU'RE THE SNAKES WHO MURDERED MY UNCLE, JIM GARRISON. I'M BRINGING YOU IN TO SHERIFF HINTON. DO YOU COME QUIETLY OR DO YOU GET CARRIED OUT?

GET HIM! STANDIN' UP TO ALL FIVE OF US! LISTEN, MARSHALL... I'M GOIN' TO COUNT TILL THREE. IF YOU AIN'T OUT THAT DOOR YOU'LL BE DEADER THAN YOUR LOUSY OLD UNCLE!

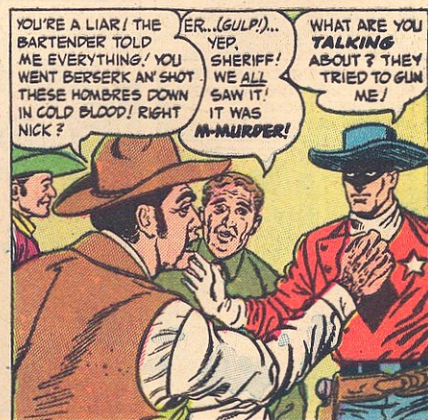


WATCH YOU STEP AIKEN. HE AIN'T NO ORDINARY LAW MAN. I HEARD THE BLACK DIAMOND CAN THROW A MEAN GU—UHHH!

SHUT UP! I'M STARTIN' TO COUNT, MARSHAL! IF YOU AIN'T SKEDADDLED BY THE TIME I'M DONE, ME AN' THE BOYS WILL START TARGET PRACTICE ONE... TWO...



...THREE! GIVE IT TO THE GREASETAIL...!



I'M SURE YOU'RE ONE OF THE VARMINTS, HINTON. I CAN'T PROVE IT NOW, BUT I INTEND TO STICK AROUND TILL I DO, C'MON, BUMPER!

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, BLACK DIAMOND! I WON'T REST TILL I SEE YOU DANCIN' AT THE END OF A ROPE... (GASP)... I'LL HAVE THE WHOLE FRONTIER AFTER YOU!



THE FOLLOWING DAY...

HMM... HINTON MEANS HIS THREAT HE'LL HAVE HUNDREDS OF THESE POSTERS NAILED UP AROUND THE COUNTY. EVERYBODY'LL BE OUT TO MAKE A QUICK \$5000!

NOT EVERYBODY, BUMPER! THE GOOD CITIZENS KNOW MY REPUTATION! IT'S THE OWL-HOOTS WHO'LL BE ON OUR NECKS!



BUT AN OWL-HOOTS BULLET IS NO FUN TO DODGE EITHER!

NO, BUMPER, BUT WE'LL DISH IT OUT AS HARD AS WE GET IT! NOTHING MORE DISCOURAGING TO A COWARD THAN A BELLYFULL OF LEAD! WHEN THEY SEE HOW EXPENSIVE IT IS TO GET US THEY'LL QUIT!



IN THE DAYS THAT PASSED THE BLACK DIAMOND BECOMES THE TARGET OF EVERY SIDEWINDER IN CARIBE COUNTY...

BUT THE OUTSIDE PROVES NO BETTER THAN THE INSIDE! WHEREVER THE BLACK DIAMOND GOES HE IS PURSUED BY WANTED POSTERS... AND VOLLEYS OF LEAD!



DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY! THEY'RE WORTH \$5,000!

OOOOHHH!

GET THE HORSES, BUMPER! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!

THEY KNOW US HERE, TOO! THEY KNOW US EVERYWHERE. MAYBE WE OUGHT TO GET OUT OF CARIBE COUNTY!

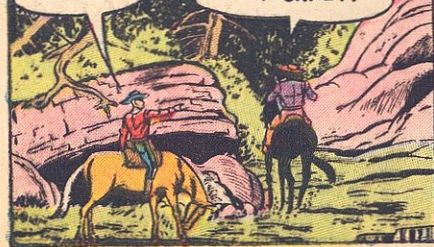
AND LET HINTON RULE THE ROOST? I'LL HANG FIRST!



A FEW DAYS LATER OUTSIDE OF CARIBE CITY...

AS SOON AS WE REACH THE RIM WE'LL BE SAFE, BUMPER. WE CAN HOLE UP FOR A FEW DAY WITHOUT ANYBODY FINDING US!

OKAY, B.D. BUT IT KEEPS TURNING OVER IN MY MIND! —HOW'D WE GET INTO A SPOT LIKE THIS? WHAT'RE WE DOING HERE, HIDING OUT LIKE CRIMINALS, WITH EVERY GUN-CARRIER IN THE TERRITORY LOOKING FOR US! IT'S CRAZY B.D.! CRAZY!



HINTON'S WANTED-POSTERS HAVE FOLLOWED US LIKE SHADOWS! HE'S SMEARED US WITH THE BRAND OF KILLERS AND IT'S STUCK! WE HAVE TO LIVE LIKE PHANTOMS, CHASED FROM ONE END OF THE COUNTY TO THE OTHER.

IT ONLY PROVES THAT HINTON IS AFRAID OF US, BUMPER! THAT'S WHY HE WANTS US DEAD!

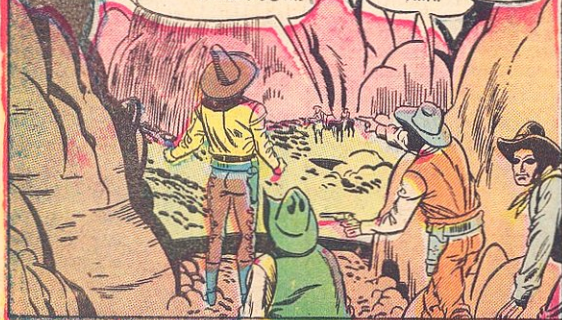


BUT WE CAN'T FIGHT BACK WHEN WE ARE EXHAUSTED. THE HORSES ARE POOPED. THEY WON'T BE WORTH A DARN IF WE HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER FOR IT. WE'LL REST A FEW DAYS HERE... FIGURE THINGS OUT...

THAT'S BLACK DIAMOND, ALRIGHT! YOU CAN SPOT HIM A MILE, BY THAT BIG GALLOOT WHO'S ALWAYS WITH HIM!

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE BUMPER! HE'S AS DEADLY AS THE BLACK DIAMOND WHEN HE'S RILED UP! QUIET! YUH GOTTA HAND IT TO HINTON! HE HAD THE CLOSING!

MARSHAL FIGGERED RIGHT! HINTON KNEW HE'D HEAD FOR THE RIM TO REST! REMEMBER... WAIT TILL THEY DISMOUNT! THEN WE'LL HAVE THEM COLD!



OKAY, MARSHAL. **THROW 'EM UP!** YOU, TOO, WALRUS-FACE! IF YOU BLINK AN EYELASH, YOU GET IT!

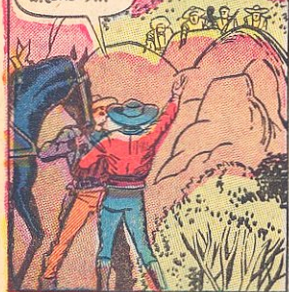
THAT WAS A NICE PIECE OF SHOOTIN' YOU DONE IN CARIBE CITY, LAST TUESDAY, MARSHAL, YOU BLASTED YOUR WAY OUT OF A STEEL TRAP! NOT **ONE** MAN IN A **HUNDRED** COULD'VE DONE IT.

IS THAT WHY YOU CAME HERE? TO COMPLIMENT ME?

NO BLACK DIAMOND! WE AIN'T PINNING NO MEDAL ON YOU! HINTON FIGGERED YOU'D BE COMIN' THIS WAY. WE'RE BRINGIN' YOU IN FOR TRIAL! TURN AROUND! BACKS TO US!

HINTON IS NO "FAIR TRIAL" TYPE! THEY'LL THROW LEAD THE SECOND OUR BACKS ARE TURNED! I'VE GOT TO CATCH BUMPER'S EYE!

H-HINTON'S DEPUTIES!
...(GASP)...



WE'RE **WAITIN'** MARSHAL! DO YOU TURN OR DO WE LET YOU HAVE IT NOW?

BUMPER CAUGHT MY EYE! HE KNOWS WHAT'S COMIN'!

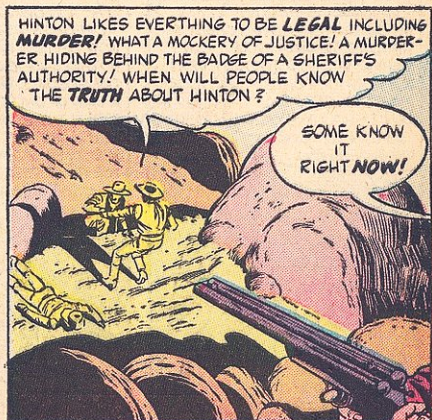
OKAY, B.D.! **GET'EM!**

...(GASP)... THEY'RE GONNA SHOOT IT OUT!

HEEE!

BANG!
BANG!





BANG!

BUMPER, CHECK THE ONE THAT WENT OVER THE SIDE!

EEEE!!!

DEAD AS A DOORNAIL! I DON'T PITY THEM, BD! WE'D BE NOTCHES ON THEIR GUNS IF WE HADN'T SLAPPED LEATHER!

BUT WHEN THESE OWLHOOTS DON'T SHOW UP IN TOWN, HINTON WILL KNOW SOMETHING BACKFIRED! HE'LL COME BACK TO INVESTIGATE... WITH HIS POSSE OF COURSE!

HINTON LIKES EVERYTHING TO BE LEGAL INCLUDING MURDER! WHAT A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE! A MURDERER HIDING BEHIND THE BADGE OF A SHERIFF'S AUTHORITY! WHEN WILL PEOPLE KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT HINTON?

SOME KNOW IT RIGHT NOW!

THE NAME'S DEERING! I GOT NO DESIGNS ON YOUR LIFE, BLACK DIAMOND IF I HAD YOU'D BE VENTILATED THIS SECOND... AN' I'LL BE \$3000 RICHER!

CHUCK DEERING!! THE RUSTLER! THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! WHY SHOULD YOU HELP ME?

BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT FELLOW! WE'RE BOTH ACCUSED OF THINGS WE DIDN'T DO! I AIN'T SAYIN' I DON'T LAY MY HANDS ON A DIRTY BUCK HERE AN' THERE... BUT I'VE BEEN AN ANGEL SINCE I CAME TO CARIBE COUNTY.

ON THE LAM, EH?

ON THE LAM. I HEERD' CARIBE COUNTY IS A SANCTUARY FOR HOT OWLHOOT. BUT IT'S A LIE! ONLY OWLHOOTS WHO JOIN HINTON'S PAYROLL ARE ALLOWED! BUT I AIN'T THE KINDA HOMBRE WHO PULLS A TRIGGER FER ANYBODY BUT NUMBER ONE!


PROFESSIONAL PRIDE?

NOPE, JUST LIKE TO BE IN BUSINESS FOR MYSELF. WHEN I TURNED DOWN HINTON'S PROPOSITION TO WORK FOR HIM, HE TURNED UGLY. THEN I BEGAN TO HEAR RUMORS. HOW I BEEN RUSTLIN' CATTLE! HOW I HELD UP STAGE-COACHES! HOW I BEEN RAIDING THE EL MUERTE SILVER MINE!




AN ME... SA I BEEN CONY' ALL DAY IS SNOOZIN' AN' BOOZIN'... PLAYIN' CARDS AN' DREAMIN'... AN' I RESENT BEIN' BLAMED FOR A MESS OF STICKUPS AN' KILLIN'S I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH!

YOU TOUCH MY HEART, DEERING! EVERY VEIN BLOODS FOR YOU...



I KNOW YOU AINT GOT MUCH SYMPATHY FOR ME, MARSHAL... EVEN THOUGH I NEVER KILLED A MAN... EXCEPT IN SELF-DEFENSE, LIKE IN A BRAWL. I AINT DENYIN' I'M A CROOK AN' ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF CARIBE COUNTY YOU CAN RUN ME IN...

IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE SOMEDAY... SO YOU WANT TO JOIN FORCES WITH ME IN NAILING HINTON?



RIGHT, FACT IS — ME AN' MY BOYS WERE COVERIN' HINTON'S GALLOOTS FROM BEHIND, IF THEY'D THROWN ANY LEAD AT YOU, WE'D HAVE CASHIERED 'EM! BUT I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU CAN DO YOUR OWN CASHIERIN'!

I CAN... BUT I CANT DENY YOUR HELP IN CRASHIN' HINTON!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AT DEERING'S HIDEOUT...

NOW MY IDEA IS THIS. — THERE'S NOTHIN' LIKE CATCHIN' A CROOK WITH THE GOODS. LIKE YOU KNOW, LATELY A BAND OF OWLHOOTS HAVE BEEN ROBBIN' THE EL MUERTE SILVER SHIPMENTS... AN' I'M BLAMED FOR IT!

I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU DEERING, WE'LL CONTACT THE AUTHORITIES AT EL MUERTE!



FORGET IT THEY'LL SHOOT YOU OR ME ON SIGHT!

OKAY THEN WE'LL REALLY PULL A RAID ON EL MUERTE AND FORCE THEM TO DO WHAT WE SAY. HMMM... I HAVEN'T BEEN OUTSIDE THE LAW A WEEK — AND ALREADY BEGUN TO THINK LIKE A CROOK!



THE FOLLOWING DAY, AT EL MUERTE SILVER MINE...

RAISE 'EM WHOEVER GOES FOR A GUN GETS SHOT!

CHUCK DEERING!... (GASP)... THE BLACK DIAMOND! ... YOU'RE IN CAHOOTS!

TEMPORARILY! HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO.



SHORTLY AFTER...

YOU'RE NOT TAKING OUR SILVER? YOU'RE LOADING THE LOCKERS WITH ROCKS! WHAT KIND OF THEIVERY IS THIS?

NO THEIVERY AT ALL! WE'RE OUT TO CATCH A THIEF! WITH YOUR COOPERATION WE'LL SUCCEED!



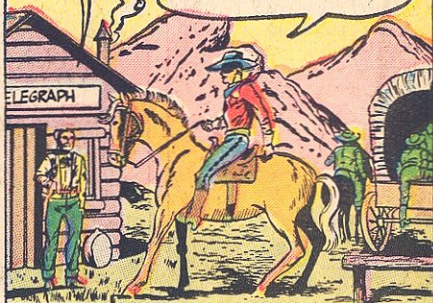
MOMENTS LATER, IN THE TELEGRAPH SHACK...

SEND THIS OUT AT ONCE! TO SHERIFF HINTON OF CARIBE COUNTY! I WANT AN ESCORT OF DEPUTIES TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE LARGEST SILVER SHIPMENT EVER TO LEAVE OUR MINE! HE'S TO MEET THE DELIVERY WAGON AT BRONSON FORK!



HINTON GOT THE MESSAGE! IF YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT HINTON—

I AM! A BAND OF OUTLAWS WILL ATTACK THE WAGON LONG BEFORE IT REACHES BRONSON FORK! WHEN IT DOES, DEERING AND I WILL BE ON HAND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!



ONE HOUR LATER, ON THE ROAD...

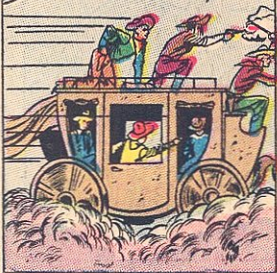
NOT A SIGN OF HINTON! IT CAN'T BE THAT HE PASSED THIS OPPORTUNITY!

WAIT! THERE'S A STAGE-COACH COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION! NO COACH IS DUE AT THIS HOUR! DO YOU THINK...



YES, THAT'S IT, BUMPER! IT'S HINTON'S OWLHOOTS!

DRAW UP ALONGSIDE AN' LET 'EM HAVE IT! CROWD THE BEGGARS OFF THE ROAD!



QUICK! AFTER 'EM! WIPE 'EM OUT! GRAB THE SILVER!

EIEI!!



BUT THE MASKED RAIDERS RUSH GLEEFULLY FORWARD—



(GASP!)... IT'S THE BLACK DIAMOND!

GET THIS STAGE OUTA HERE! I SEEN THE BLACK DIAMOND IN ACTION BEFORE! FORGET ABOUT THE OTHERS!



BUT AS A SUDDEN METALLIC SOUND REACHES THE MASKED LEADER'S EARS...



BOSS, ARE YOU LOCO? I THOUGHT WE WERE VAMMOOSIN!

NOT-WHEN THE BLACK DIAMOND IS OUT OF / AMMUNITION! BY THE TIME HE CAN RELOAD, I'LL SPREAD HIM FLAT ON THE PRAIRIE! GO, YOU DEVILS, GO!

CLICE!
CLICE!
CLICE!



LOOK, BOSS! OUR BOYS ARE COMIN' DOWN FROM THE HILLS TO JOIN US!

GREAT! THE MORE HELP THE BETTER! WE GOT THE BLACK DIAMOND COLD! HE CAN'T ESCAPE! -AH, HE SEES US.



(GASP!)...BLACK DIAMOND! THEY GOT US!

NOT YET! WE'VE GOT ONE CHANCE... REALIAPON! EL LOBO! STOP THEM! QUICK!

WHINNEY!



(GASP!)...THEY UNDERSTOOD! THEY'RE TURNING THE COACH HORSES... BUT WE'RE STILL LIKED! THEYVE GOT MORE OWL-HOOTS COMING ON HORSES!

DEERING WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM! LETS HANDLE THE BUNCH ON THE STAGE-COACH!



BANG! BANG!
PHEEEEEE!
OUGGGH!



V-YOU'RE RIGHT, B.D. HERE COMES DEERING. HE'S MOPPING UP!

YAAAH!



D-DON'T SHOOT... (GASP)... WE GIVE UP!

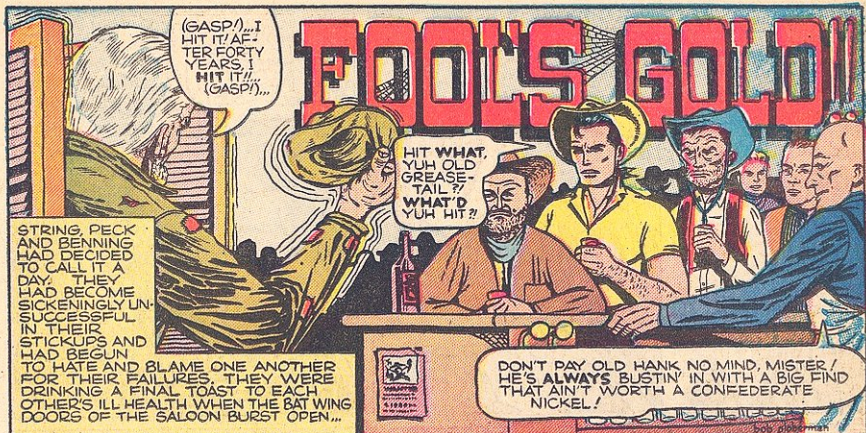
BRR-TA-BAAANING!



S SHORTLY AFTER, AS THE BLACK DIAMOND REMOVES A MASK FROM ONE OF THE CORPSE'S FACE...

ITS HINTON, JUST LIKE WE THOUGHT, YUH'RE CLEARED, BLACK DIAMOND! NOBODY WANTS YOU NO MORE!

NOBODY EVER WILL! YOU BETTER REMEMBER THAT, TOO, DEERING! A MARKED MAN CANT LIVE IN PEACE OR REST IN PEACE!... LIKE HINTON, ALL A CROOK GETS OUT OF HIS CRIMES IS A MOUND ON BOOT HILL.



(GASP!)... I HIT IT! AFTER FORTY YEARS, I HIT IT! (GASP!)...

FOOL'S GOLD!!

STRING PECK AND BENNING HAD DECIDED TO CALL IT A DAY. THEY HAD BECOME SICKENINGLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN THEIR STICKUPS AND HAD BEGUN TO HATE AND BLAME ONE ANOTHER FOR THEIR FAILURES. THEY WERE DRINKING A FINAL TOAST TO EACH OTHER'S ILL HEALTH WHEN THE BAT WING DOORS OF THE SALOON BURST OPEN...



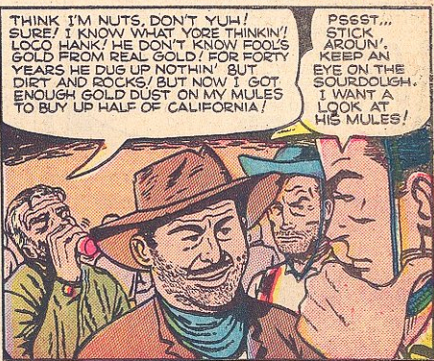
HIT WHAT, YUH OLD GREASE-TAIL? WHAT'D YUH HIT?!

DON'T PAY OLD HANK NO MIND, MISTER / HE'S ALWAYS BUSTIN' IN WITH A BIG FIND THAT AIN'T WORTH A CONFEDERATE NICKEL!



YORE A LIAR, JIM HIGGINS / A BALD-FACED, CROSS-EYED LIAR! I KNOW I AIN'T FOUND NO THIN', TILL NOW BUT FOOL'S GOLD, BUT TODAY I HIT IT! I HIT IT, I TELL YUH!

OKAY HANK... SO YUH HIT IT, HAVE A DRINK ON THE HOUSE.



THINK I'M NUTS, DON'T YUH! SURE! I KNOW WHAT YORE THINKIN'! LOCO HANK! HE DON'T KNOW FOOL'S GOLD FROM REAL GOLD! FOR FORTY YEARS HE DUG UP NOTHIN' BUT DIRT AND ROCKS! BUT NOW I GOT ENOUGH GOLD DUST ON MY MULES TO BUY UP HALF OF CALIFORNIA!

PSSET... STICK AROUND', KEEP AN EYE ON THE SORR'DOUGH. I WANT A LOOK AT HIS MULES!



FOLKS SAY IF YUH KEEP AT A THING LONG ENOUGH... (HIC!) ...YORE BOUND TO STRIKE PAY DIRT? WELL, I STRUCK IT! I STRUCK IT BIG!!

HMMM... IT'S HARD TO TELL IF IT'S GENUINE IN THIS LIGHT! IT LOOKS LIKE GOLD! BUT SO DOES FOOL'S GOLD!



THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO TAKE IT, AN' DECIDE LATER! MEBBE THIS'S THE HAUL STRING, BENNING' AN' ME HAVE BEEN WAITIN' FOR!!



LATER THAT NIGHT, JUST OUT OF TOWN...

GITTIN' THE GOLD'S A CINCH! HOW DO WE ESCAPE WITH IT?!

HEAD FOR THE DESERT AN' TAKE THE PACK MULES WITH US! NOW QUIET! HERE COMES THE OLD BUZZARD NOW!



OKAY! TOGETHER!
LET HIM HAVE IT!

!!!EEEEE

BANG BANG BANG



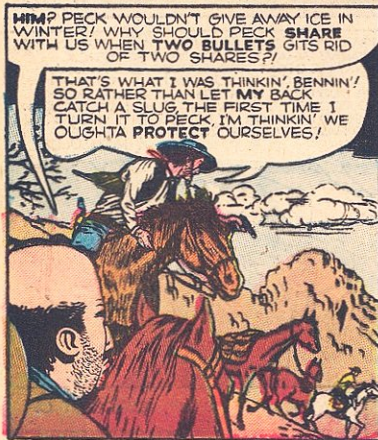
HE'S DEAD! GIT
MOVIN'! THERE'S
A CHANCE THEY
MIGHT SEND A
POSSE OUT, EVEN
THOUGH WE ARE
HEADIN' INTO
THE DESERT!

WE'RE COMIN',
PECK!—PESST...
BENNIN'!
WHAT D'YUH
THINK OF
THIS DEAL?



I THINK PECK
SEEN SOMETHIN'
WHEN HE LOOKED
INTO THEM BAGS!
HE WOULDN'T
WASTE NO TIME
ON FOOL'S GOLD!

RIGHT!—WHICH
GIVES ME ANOTHER
IDEA! IF THIS
HERE'S THE STICK-
UP OF STICKUPS,
WHAT WOULD PECK
WANT WITH US?
SHARIN' THE GOLD,
I MEAN? IS PECK
A NATURAL-BORN
SHARER?



HIM? PECK WOULDN'T GIVE AWAY ICE IN
WINTER! WHY SHOULD PECK
SHARE WITH US WHEN TWO BULLETS
WASH RID OF TWO SHARES?

THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKIN',
BENNIN'!
SO RATHER THAN LET MY BACK
CATCH A SLUG, THE FIRST TIME
I TURN IT TO PECK, I'M THINKIN' WE
OUGHTA PROTECT OURSELVES!



YOU'RE THINKIN'
RIGHT! LET THE
DOUBLE-CROSSIN'
SON-OF-A-GUN
HAVE IT!!

GRAB THE LEAD
MULE, BENNIN'!
I KNOW THE SAME
SHORT CUT PECK
DID!

BANG
BANG



THAT WAS A MILLION DOLLAR
SHOT, BENNIN'! A LEAD BULLET
THAT COSTS A FEW CENTS
AN IT BROUGHT US A FOR-
TUNE! GIDDAP YU! SONS OF
SATAN! GIDDAP!

HMMM... IF KILLIN' PECK
BRUNG STRING A FORTUNE
HE CAN DOUBLE HIS
FORTUNE BY GITTIN' RID
OF ME! STRING DON'T
CARE NO MORE FUR ME
THAN HE DONE FUR
PECK!



OR I FUR HIM! I CAN DOUBLE
MY TAKE BY KILLIN' STRING!
THAT'S IT!—I'LL PLUG STRING
THE FIRST CHANCE I GIT!



BENNIN'S AWFUL QUIET! I WON-
DER WHAT HE'S THINKIN'? IS
IT WHAT I'M THINKIN'? HOW
NICE IT WOULD BE IF THERE
WAS NO BENNIN'?



MAYBE HE IS THINKIN'
THAT! WELL, I'LL OUT-
THINK BENNIN'! I'LL
BLAST HIM WHEN THE
BLASTIN'S GOOD!!

BY THE TIME THE SUN REACHED ITS ZENITH THE NEXT MORNING THE TWO MEN HAD ENTERED THAT BLAZING FURNACE... THAT NATURAL OVEN THAT KNEW NO COOLING... THE DESERT! EACH MAN, STRANGELY ENOUGH, HAD THE SAME THOUGHT!!

I'LL KILL HIM THE FIRST CHANCE I GET! THE FIRST TIME HE TURNS HIS BACK TO ME!

I'LL PLUM HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS! HE'S GOTTA LIE DOWN SOME TIME AN' CLOSE HIS FAT EYES!



BUT AS THE SUN GREW HOTTER AND HOTTER, STRING AND BENKIN REALIZED THAT IN THEIR HASTE, THEY'D MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE! THEY'D TAKEN ALONG NO WATER! JUST THE FEW DROPS IN THEIR CANTENS!!

THERE'S ANOTHER REASON TO CROAK THET FAT HOSS; I NEED HIS WATER! BUT I GOTTA WORK FAST! THE SOONER I KILL HIM, THE LESS HE'LL DRINK!

I WANT HIS WATER, I WANT HIS GOLD AN' I WANT HIM DEAD! LOOK THE OTHER WAY, STRING! LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN! LOOK FOR AN'YTHIN' BUT THE BULLET YU'LL GIT!



MEANWHILE, IN TOWN, THEY FOUND THE RIDDLED BODY OF OLD HANK...



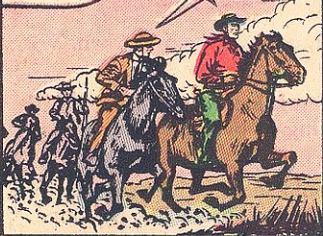
IT MUST'VE BEEN THEM THREE COYOTES WHO WERE TANKIN' UP AT THE SALOON! JIM HIGGINS SAID THEY WAS GALLOWES BATT' PORE HANK! HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM!

WAL, THEM MURDERIN' BUZZARDS AIN'T GIT-TIN' AWAY WITH IT! WE'RE FORMIN' A POSSE! -WE'LL TRAIL 'EM STRAIGHT TO KINGDOM COME!!

LATER THAT DAY...

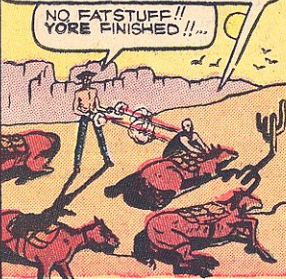
ONE THING IS SURE! THEM OWLHOOTS MUST BE CRAZIER THAN OLD HANK WAS! FOR FORTY YEARS HANK IMAGINED HE MADE A GOLD STRIKE! SOMETIMES HE FILLED HIS BAGS WITH ROCKS... SOMETIMES WITH SAND...

SHORE! BUT OLD HANK WAS SWEET AN' HARMLESS! KILLIN' HIM WAS LIKE KILLIN' A CHILD!



LATER THAT DAY, AS THE SKIN-SHRIVELLING SUN CLAIMED THE PACK MULES...

(GASP!)... T-THEY WON'T GIT UP STRING! (GASP!)... T-THEY'RE DYIN' ON US! DYIN' WITH MILLIONS OF BUCKS WORTH OF GOLD ON THEIR BACKS!... W-WE'RE FINISHED, STRING! WE'RE FINISHED!...



NO FAT STUFF!! YORE FINISHED!!...

I'M ON MY OWN! (GASP!)... GOT ENOUGH GOLD ON M-MY BACK TO RETIRE ON... AN' I'M GONNA MAKE IT, TOO... (GASP!)... THEM BUZZARDS AIN'T GONNA PICK MY SCMES! N-NO!... NO!... NOT ME!... (GASP!)... I-I'M MAKIN' IT!



BUT BY SUNDOWN...

WE BEEN SPARED A TRIAL AN' A HANGIN', HERE'S TWO SKELETONS! BUT WHERE'S THE THIRD?

MEBBE IT'S WHERE'S THET FLOCK OF VULTURES IS RISIN'! C'MON!



AND IT WAS!! A THIRD SKELETON WITH BAGS TRAILING OUT BEHIND IT! BUT THE POSSE... UPON EXAMINING THE BAGS...

H-HOLY JUMPIN'...! (GASP!)... G-GOLD DUST! TONS OF IT!... NUGGETS--S-SOLID GOLD!!



YES, AFTER FORTY YEARS... OLD HANK... CRAZY OLD HANK... AND THOSE WHO ROBBED HIM... HAD FINALLY STRUCK IT RICH!!

IN JUN JOE

AND

The Forked Stick

by "The Old Cowhand"



A bunch of us were lazing around the corral at the Double Bar-O ranch, about 20 miles north of Amarillo, one day back in July 1904. Things were pretty quiet as most of the boys and the bossman were away driving a big herd to market.

We hadn't had a bit of fighting trouble or anything since Black Diamond and Bumper had helped us drive the rustlers north. Yes sir, things were so doggoned quiet, that we were beginning to yen for some excitement or something.

Payday was still two weeks off so there wasn't much use to go to town. We were bored stiff, all of us.

Whilst we were chewing the fat, suddenly old Mark looked up, his face full of excitement, and yelled, "Whoopee—someone's riding in over the desert. Look at that dust yonder."

Sure enough this was no mirage for soon we could see the rider coming in, plain as a possum. It turned out to be no stranger, but our old pal, Black Diamond.

Boy, were we glad to see him. Of course we would have been glad to see anyone, but good old Black Diamond was a feast for sore eyes.

He was mighty welcome and just in time for chow. After we'd filled our bellies good and rolled ourselves a smoke out of the Bull Durham sack, we sat back and asked Black Diamond if he knew anything worth talking about. He did and told us an amusing yarn.

It seems he had been up in Goldfield, Nevada, the big boom mining town that everybody was talking about. The first real strike had been made only about a year ago right in the desert, and the town now had over 10,000 people and was growing crazy-like. There were already six or seven big mines in operation and thousands of claims staked out.

There was a lot of trouble in the town, what with mighty little law and some rough hombres from all over. Soon these sneaky devils found a clever way of stealing themselves a fortune—something new and unheard of in those parts—they called it "highgrading." These highgraders would take a job in the mines at \$5.00 a day. They could have gotten \$50.00 a day tending bar or shoeing horses.

But not for them—because you could only highgrade in the mines. This is the way they were working it.

All the mines in Goldfield were producing millions of dollars and every hour or so some miner would run onto a hunk of high grade ore—a small piece, size of a fire brick might assay up to a thousand dollars in pure gold. Sometimes a miner would come upon a real nugget of solid gold—worth \$5,000.00 or more.

Now it seemed a real shame to shovel this high grade ore into the company bins along with the regular ore. It seemed a lot smarter to hide these hunks of ore under their shirts and lug them off at the end of the day. Some guys even put on a woman's corset under their shirt and attached special pockets so they could lug off a lot of high grade ore.

It got so bad finally, that the company bosses decided to take steps to stop this stealing.

It was just at this time that Black Diamond was in Goldfield, and the big Florence mine hired him to put a stop to "highgrading."

The very first day, while he was searching for the hideout in the hills where the thieves were storing the loot, he ran onto an old Injun prospector who was looking for gold deposits with a forked stick—a divining rod.

You see there are many who believe that if you hold a forked ash stick horizontally out in front of you and walk slowly over likely ground, if there's gold underneath the surface, the stick will bend towards the earth.

While Black Diamond was talking with old Injun Joe—who comes along, but a couple of miners pulling a burro behind them. When they saw Black Diamond, somehow, they seemed to recognize him and turned sharp to beat it.

But the burro wouldn't budge.

Black Diamond got suspicious, when they decided to stay with the burro, instead of running for safety—and they acted mighty guilty.

"Walk over and see what they got," said Black Diamond to the Indian, "and I'll keep those rats covered."

Over goes old Injun Joe. The two strangers just stood there—as they had to, when Black Diamond had a bead on them with both six shooters.

"We ain't done a thing—not nothin' at all," exclaimed one of them. And they looked real innocent too. But just then old Joe's forked stick began to twitch and shiver, and it pointed right to the pack bags on the burro.

"Come quick, Black Diamond, come quick," yelled Injun Joe, excitedly. "I have found the stolen gold."

Black Diamond raced over, opened up the pack bags—and sure enough, they were filled with high grade ore and nuggets of pure gold, all stolen from the mine.

When they got the pack bags back to the assay office in Goldfield, they were found to be worth \$106,000.00—quite a haul.

The two highgraders were tried up in Tonapah and got two years—suspended. But the company was happy because it scared off the highgraders for a while, and they put Pinkertons in the mines to watch out.

And who do you think these highgraders turned out to be. Well, sir, two of the rustlers, Black Diamond had driven off the Double Bar-O six months before.



COMANCHE

WAR DRUMS



HEAVEN HELP US IF RELIAPON AND EL LOBO STUMBLE!

+GASP+ BLACK DIAMOND!
L-LOOK WHAT'S AHEAD!

THEY SAY THAT BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER, BUT NOT WHEN THERE'S **BAD BLOOD** BETWEEN BROTHERS. AS IF BATTLING A MURDEROUS COMANCHE UPRISING WEREN'T **TROUBLE** ENOUGH, THE **BLACK DIAMOND** FINDS HIMSELF TRAPPED IN A WEB OF PASSIONS IN WHICH BROTHER IS PITTED AGAINST BROTHER IN A DUEL OF HATRED THAT CAN ONLY END IN DEATH AND DISASTER!

ONE BLAZING HOT AFTERNOON AT A SOUTHWEST ARMY OUTPOST, FORT ADOBE...

MAJOR? MAJOR TUCKER? GOOD HEAVENS!!!
QUICK! T-THE SUPPLY TRAIN IS HERE! ...+GASP+... NOT ANOTHER ATTACK??!



YUH MEAN... WHAT'S LEFT OF IT?

YES, MAJOR! ANOTHER AMBUSH! AGAIN THEY GOT AWAY WITH MOST OF OUR SUPPLIES. ACCORDING TO LT. HARRIS, IT WAS THE **SAME BUNCH!** YOUR... **BROTHER!**... **CLINT TUCKER!**



CLINTS ADDED TO HIS BAND, MAJOR! THE SURVIVORS COUNTED AT LEAST **TWENTY OWLHOOTS** IN HIS PACK!

CLINT'S A NO GOOD CUTTHROAT! BUT WHY SHOULD HE PICK ON FORT ADOBE?

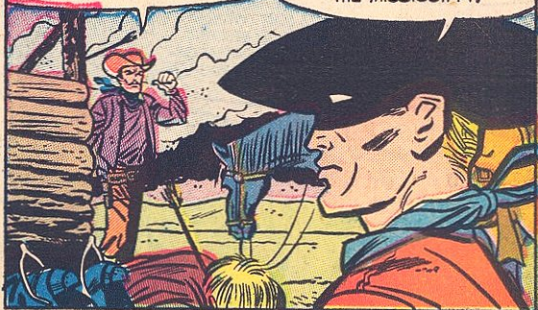
I CAN THINK OF A LOT OF REASONS, SIR! BUT WED BETTER NAIL HIM AND FAST! **WHATEVER** THE REASON! WITH TALK OF A COMANCHE UPRISING, HIS RAIDS COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!



THAT EVENING, NOT FAR FROM FORT ADOBE...

THEY'RE ALL DEAD INSIDE, BLACK DIAMOND! SAME AS IN THOSE OTHER RANCHES WE RAN ACROSS!

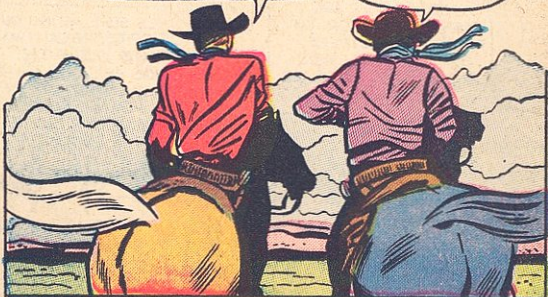
WE'RE IN FOR IT, BUMPER! EVERY NOW AND THEN, SOME COMANCHE HOT HEAD GETS VISIONS OF GRANDEUR, OF PUSHING THE WHITE MAN BACK BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI!



HE SEIZES ON SOME TRIBAL GRIEVANCE, LIQUORS UP HIS STUPIDEST YOUNG BUCKS AND GOES OUT ON A KILLING SPREE THAT LASTS ONLY AS LONG AS IT TAKES THE ARMY TO PUT DOWN HIS UPRISING! -- GET YOUR SHOVEL, BUMPER!

WE CAME HERE TO TRACK DOWN CLINT TUCKER, BUT WELL **FORGET** ABOUT THAT, BUMPER! THIS COMANCHE PROBLEM IS MORE SERIOUS! WE'LL HEAD FOR FORT ADOBE RIGHT NOW!

IF THERE'S A FORT ADOBE LEFT! THE WAY THESE INJUNS HAVE BEEN ACTING UP, **ANYTHING** CAN HAPPEN!



LATER THAT NIGHT AT FORT ADOBE...

MAN! THAT WAS **SOME** MEAL, MRS. TUCKER!

NO THANKS TO CLINT TUCKER! IF IT WAS LEFT TO MY BROTHER, CLINT, WED ALL BE FEEDING **WORMS**, NOT OURSELVES!

HOW'S THAT, MAJOR?



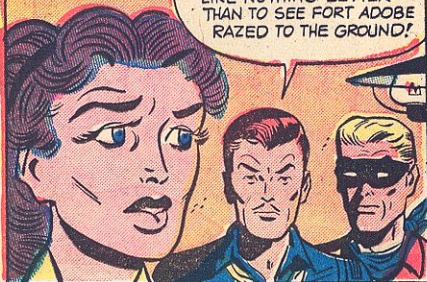
MY BROTHER CLINT WAS THE BAD APPLE IN THE FAMILY. IT'S AS IF HED BEEN **MADE WRONG**. HE STARTED WITH PETTY THIEVERY AND GAMBLING, THEN HE GRADUATED TO RUSTLING, HOLDUPS AND **MURDER!** I TRIED TO STOP HIM! NOT A CHANCE!

CLINT **HATES** SAM... BECAUSE OF ME!



CLINT FANCIED HIMSELF IN LOVE WITH ME. HE WANTED ME TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM. BUT I LOVED SAM. WHEN I MARRIED SAM, CLINT WENT BERSERK. HE EVEN TRIED TO KILL SAM!

THAT'S TRUE, BLACK DIAMOND. CLINT WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO SEE FORT ADOBE RAZED TO THE GROUND!



HE'LL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE, UNLESS WE CAPTURE HIM! MAJOR, I KNOW CLINT TUCKER IS YOUR BROTHER, BUT TO ME HE'S A COLD BLOODED KILLER I'VE BEEN TRAILING FOR A MONTH!

YOU NEEDN'T EXPLAIN, BLACK DIAMOND. CLINT'S ATTACKS HAVE EXPOSED THE FORT AND SETTLEMENTS TO COMANCHE MASSACRE!!!



CLINT SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE ANY OTHER DESPERADO. YOU HAVE MY FULL COOPERATION IN TRACKING HIM DOWN AND DESTROYING HIM!

GOOD! BUMPER AND I ARE GOING AFTER HIM TONIGHT, MEANWHILE, ALERT THE SETTLEMENTS AND ASK FOR IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENTS!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING ON THE PRAIRIE!!!

TUCKER'S PASSED THIS WAY! THERE ARE WAGON TRACKS EVERYWHERE! HIS HIDEOUT MUST BE IN THOSE HILLS!

HE'S SURE ACTING OUT OF SPITE! HE CAN'T MAKE A DIME OUT OF THE THINGS HE STOLE. ALL HE GOT WAS FOOD, AMMO AND GU--! GASP! LISTEN!! PUT YOUR EAR CLOSE TO THE GROUND!



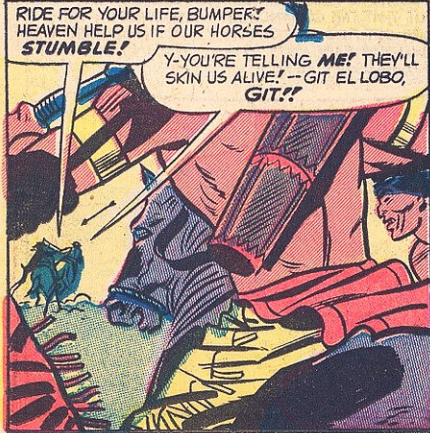
I-IT'S A LARGE BODY OF RIDERS, COMING THIS WAY!!

H-HERE THEY COME! THEY'RE COMANCHE!!

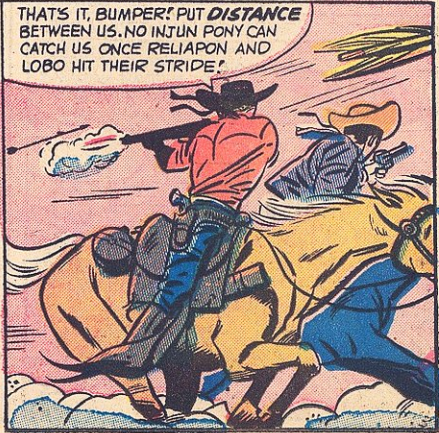


RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE, BUMPER! HEAVEN HELP US IF OUR HORSES STUMBLE!

Y-YOU'RE TELLING ME! THEY'LL SKIN US ALIVE! --GIT EL LOBO, GIT!!

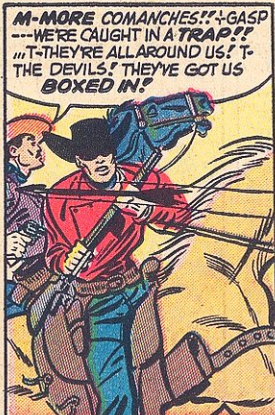


THAT'S IT, BUMPER! PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN US. NO INJUN PONY CAN CATCH US ONCE RELIAPAN AND LOBO HIT THEIR STRIDE!





+GASP!- BLACK DIAMOND! LOOK W-WHATS, AHEAD!

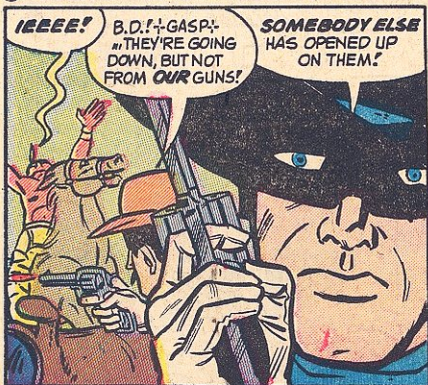


M-MORE COMANCHES!!-GASP!
--WE'RE CAUGHT IN A TRAP!!
--T-THEY'RE ALL AROUND US! T-THE DEVILS! THEY'VE GOT US BOXED IN!



D-DON'T SAY THAT! I DON'T WANT TO GO THERE AT ALL!

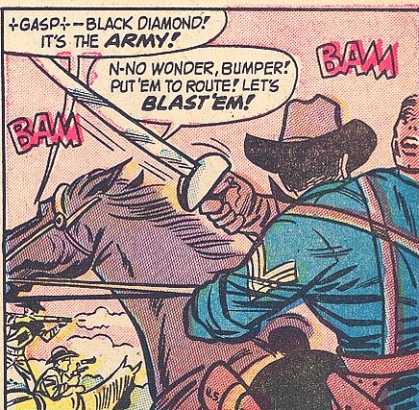
SUDDENLY AS THE HOWLING COMANCHES GOT CLOSER...



IEEEEE!

B.D.!-GASP!
--THEY'RE GOING DOWN, BUT NOT FROM OUR GUNS!

SOMEBODY ELSE HAS OPENED UP ON THEM!



+GASP!- BLACK DIAMOND! IT'S THE ARMY!

N-NO WONDER, BUMPER! PUT 'EM TO ROUTE! LET'S BLAST 'EM!

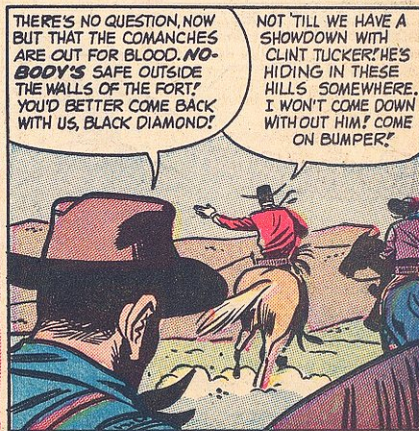
BAM

BAM



IT'S A GOOD THING I TOOK THE TROOP OUT ON MANUEVERS! THEY HAD YOU IN ADVISE!

THEY'RE FOOLS! WHEN WILL THEY UNDERSTAND THAT KILLING A FEW HELPLESS SETTLERS AND STRAY RIDERS CAN DO NOTHING BUT GET THEM INTO TROUBLE!



THERE'S NO QUESTION, NOW BUT THAT THE COMANCHES ARE OUT FOR BLOOD. NO-BODY'S SAFE OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE FORT! YOU'D BETTER COME BACK WITH US, BLACK DIAMOND!

NOT TILL WE HAVE A SHOWDOWN WITH CLINT TUCKER! HE'S HIDING IN THESE HILLS SOMEWHERE. I WON'T COME DOWN WITH OUT HIM! COME ON BUMPER!

HOURS LATER AT NIGHTFALL

THEIR TRAIL LEADS RIGHT UP THIS MOUNTAIN, BUMPER. THEY'RE PROBABLY HOLED UP IN SOME CAVE.

WE HAVE OUR WORK CUT OUT, BLACK DIAMOND. ACCORDING TO THE MATOR, CLINT'S GOT HALF AN ARMY WITH HIM!



IT'S THE BLACK DIAMOND, ALL RIGHT? SNEAK UP BEHIND HIM SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE. THEN WE'LL MOVE IN ON HIM!

OKAY, CLINT. C'MON, BOYS!



TEN MINUTES LATER

+GASP+--BLACK DIAMOND--T-THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US? THEY SEEN US COMING!

WE COULD SHOOT IT OUT AND TAKE PLENTY OF 'EM WITH US! BUT I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA! WE'LL USE NATURE IN OUR DEFENSE!



WE'LL START A ROCK SLIDE! THEN WE'LL COME DOWN BEHIND IT!



L-LOOK OUT! +GASP+!

IT'S A SLIDE!

IIIIIEEE!



THE POOR SLOBS! THEY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT 'EM!

RRUMBLEE!



+GASP+--DON'T SHOOT, BLACK DIAMOND? WE GIVE UP, WE'RE YOUR PRISONERS!

THEN THROW DOWN YOUR GUNS, TUCKER! THROW 'EM DOWN, FAST!



SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE OUTLAW'S HANGOUT...

GET YOUR HORSES, TUCKER. WE'RE RIDING BACK TO FORT ADOBE TONIGHT!

SO IT'S ALL OVER WITH ME, EH? WELL, IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER. EVERY BAD MAN COMES TO A BAD END... ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BLACK DIAMOND?



IT'S RIGHT IN **YOUR** CASE, TUCKER. YOU DESERVE HANGING **TEN** TIMES OVER. YOUR RAIDS ON ARMY SUPPLY TRAINS LEFT THE SETTLEMENTS EXPOSED TO COMANCHE RAIDS!

FUNNY? I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY. I FELT I WAS GETTING EVEN WITH MY BROTHER, SAM. I HATED SAM! SAM STOLE THE GIRL I LOVED, AND HE **WINS** EVEN IN THE END... **GOOD-NATURED** STUPID SAM! I GET HANGED AND **HE** GOES ON WITH DOLLY!



TWO HOURS LATER, ENROUTE TO FORT ADOBE--

BELIEVE IT OR NOT--THAT'S WHAT TURNED ME BAD. --LOSING DOLLY TO SAM! I LOVED DOLLY MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD! I'D HAVE GIVEN MY **LIFE** FOR HER!--AND SHE PREFERRED THAT STIFF-NECKED COLORLESS FOOL!

AS IT TURNED OUT, SHE MADE A WISE CHOICE! BETTER THE COLORLESS MAJOR THAN THE COLORFUL CUTTHROAT!



GASP! FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN!... **BLACK DIAMOND... C-COMANCHES ARE ATTACKING FORT ADOBE!!**

THE FORTS **AFIRE!** HEAVEN HELP THE POST IF THOSE LIKKERED UP FOOLS BREACH THE STOCKADE!



DOLLY'S IN THERE, BLACK DIAMOND! I DON'T CARE A LICK FOR THE **OTHERS**--BUT THE GIRL I LOVE **CAN'T**!! **MUSTN'T**.. DIE! TAKE A CHANCE ON ME, BLACK DIAMOND! GIVE US BACK OUR GUNS! LET US FIGHT THE COMANCHES!

ARE YOU **CRAZY?** YOU'D ONLY TAKE IT ON THE **LAM!**



NO! NEVER! NOT NOW! NOTHING MATTERS TO ME BUT THAT GIRL'S LIFE! OUR FIREPOWER COULD TURN THE TIDE. DON'T BE A FOOL, LAWMAN. IF NOT THE GIRL, THINK OF THE **OTHERS** IN THE FORT.



TAKE A CHANCE! THE FORTS IN A FIX IF YOU **DON'T!**

ALL RIGHT, TUCKER. YOU GET YOUR GUNS. **DOUBLE** CROSS ME AND YOU WON'T LIVE TO GLOAT ABOUT IT!



BUT MOMENTS LATER---

SUCKER! THAT STUPID FRILL MEANS **NOTHING** TO ME! LET HER **DIE** FOR CHOOSING SAM INSTEAD OF ME! C'MON, BOYS! JOIN THE SLAUGHTER! AFTER ALL, IT'S **US** WHO PUT THE **GUNS** IN THOSE REDSKIN'S HANDS!

† GASP †... THE DIRTY--H-HE LIED!



HE'S BEEN RAIDING THE SUPPLY TRAINS IN ORDER TO SELL ARMY GUNS AND MUNITION TO THE COMANCHES



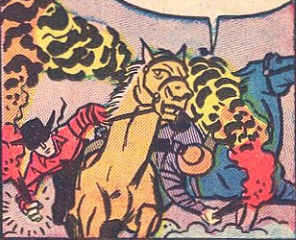
WAIT A MINUTE, FORT ADOBE ISN'T DONE FOR YET! NOT WHILE THE **WIND'S** BLOWING IN THE DIRECTION IT IS! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!



SHORTLY AFTER IN THE SHADOWS OF FORT ADOBE...

THERE HASN'T BEEN RAIN HERE IN A MONTH. THE PRAIRIE GRASS IS LIKE **TINDER!**

I GET IT! THE FIRE WON'T JUMP THE CLEARING AND REACH THE FORT. THE WIND WON'T **LET** IT!



YIIII BEEAAAA

IT'S **WORKING** THEY'RE TURNING **BACK!**



MAJOR TUCKER, **LOOK!** THE BLACK DIAMOND HAS STARTED A PRAIRIE FIRE! THE REDSKIN'S ARE ON THE RUN!

IT'S A-A MIRACLE! WE'RE **SAVED**, DOLLY! WE'RE **SAVED!**



CLINT--† GASP †-- CLINT!-- WE'RE **TRAPPED!** THE **FIRE'S** ALL **AROUND** US!!

N-NO! IT **CAN'T** BE--**RIDE!**--**RIDE!**



NO! T-THERE'S **NO WAY** OUT--
--IT'S ALL AROUND--
YAAAAAAAAAAAA!



THE NEXT MORNING---

GOODBYE, BLACK DIAMOND-- WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, ESPECIALLY MYSELF! I HAD SOME SLIGHT FEELING THAT THERE WAS **SOME** GOOD LEFT IN CLINT--BUT THAT'S ERASED NOW!

IT **SHOULD** BE, MRS. TUCKER. CLINT TUCKER WAS AS **ROTTEN** AS THE MAJOR IS FINE! HE FANNED THE FLAMES OF HATRED AND **DIED** IN THOSE FLAMES AS HE DESERVED!



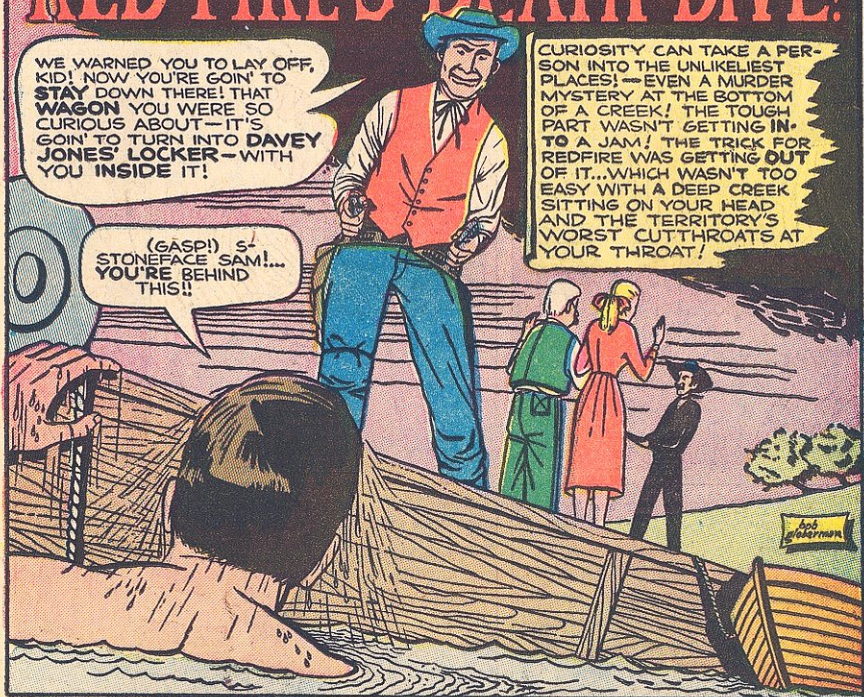
THE END.

RED FIRE'S DEATH DIVE!

WE WARNED YOU TO LAY OFF, KID! NOW YOU'RE GOIN' TO **STAY** DOWN THERE! THAT **WAGON** YOU WERE SO CURIOUS ABOUT—IT'S GOIN' TO TURN INTO **DAVEY JONES' LOCKER**—WITH YOU INSIDE IT!

(GASP!) S^t STONEFACE SAM!... YOU'RE BEHIND THIS!!

CURIOSITY CAN TAKE A PERSON INTO THE UNLIKELIEST PLACES!—EVEN A MURDER MYSTERY AT THE BOTTOM OF A CREEK! THE TOUGH PART WASN'T GETTING IN TO A JAM! THE TRICK FOR REDFIRE WAS GETTING OUT OF IT...WHICH WASN'T TOO EASY WITH A DEEP CREEK SITTING ON YOUR HEAD AND THE TERRITORY'S WORST CUTTHROATS AT YOUR THROAT!



THE RODEO HAD COME TO TOWN AND THE WHOLE COMMUNITY—INCLUDING RED FIRE—HAD TURNED OUT TO SEE IT!

NOW JANE JOHNSON WITH-OUT HOLDIN' ON WILL PICK UP A NECKER-CHIEF WITH HER **TEETH!** NOTE THE SPEED AT WHICH HER HORSE IS RACIN'!!

THAT GIRL SURE CAN RIDE, EH, WOLF??



WOOOOF

JANE JOHNSON'S PERFORMANCE WAS MAGNIFICENT, BUT NOT **EVERYBODY** ON THE PREMISES WAS WATCHING IT!

YUH GOT EVERYTHIN' STRAIGHT, JOHNSON? YUH PLUG THE CASHIER...WHICH IS OUR SIGNAL TO CLOSE IN ON ANYBODY ELSE NEAR THE TICKET WAGON...

OKAY, BUT I'LL TOTE THE DOUGH. I DON'T TRUST YOU HOMBRES AS FAR AS I CAN HEAVE A HORSE!!



WE DON'T TRUST YOU, NEITHER, JOHNSON, SO WE'RE EVEN! JUST SHOOT STRAIGHT...AN' RUN FAST...YUH'LL HAVE **NOTHIN'** TO WORRY ABOUT!

I BETTER NOT! YOU DON'T KNOW ME WELL OR LONG... BUT I'M NOBODY TO DOUBLECROSS!!



SHORTLY AFTER, IN THE TICKET-WAGON...

OH! IT'S YOU, ED! WE GOT A LOTTA CASH HERE! CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL...

THAT'S RIGHT, BILL. I RECKON WE TOOK IN MORE TODAY THAN WE DID ALL WEEK. THOUGHT I'D DROP IN AN' SEE IF EVERYTHIN' WAS ALL RIGHT...



THAT'S MIGHTY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, ED... BUT EVERYTHIN'S FINE! JUST FI-HEEE

SORRY, BILL! IT WAS YOU OR THE MONEY... AN' I LIKE MONEY MORE!



8-BOSS! I HEARD SHOTS! ...FROM THE TICKET-WAGON!

SO DID I! SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG, BILL IS IN THERE ALONE!



QUICK! LET'S SEE WHAT HARPE-EEAAA

THE BOYS'RE ON THE JOB! THIS GIVES ME A PERFECT GET-AWAY!



THERE GOES THOSE GUYS! HE'S GOT THE DOUGH WITH HIM!

SCATTER-ALL OF YUH-LIKE WE ARRANGED/YUH KNOW THE MEETIN' PLACE!

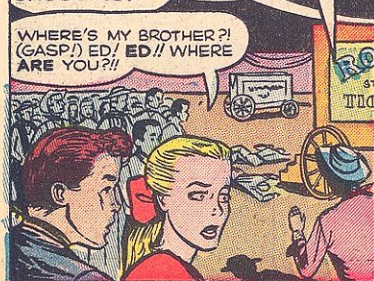


MOMENTS LATER, AS THE STARTLED CROWD RUSHES TOWARD THE TICKET-WAGON—

(GASP!) T-THERE'S BEEN A SHOOTING!

WHERE'S MY BROTHER? (GASP!) ED! ED!! WHERE ARE YOU?!

NO-A HOLDUP!! ...THEY JUST GOT AWAY!!



DON'T GO INTO THE WAGON, MISS JOHNSON. BILL'S LYIN' THERE, DEAD. YOUR BROTHER'S MISSIN'... COULD BE HE WAS TAKEN AS A HOSTAGE!

N-NO!.. (GASP!) T-THEY'LL KILL HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! FIND HIM... PLEASE... PLEASE! ... (SOB!)...



THAT NIGHT, AS RED FIRE HEADS FOR HOME ACROSS GERMAN'S CREEK...

HI, GRAMPS! JEST THAT THE SHERIFF THINKS ED JOHNSON WASN'T CAPTURED. THE SHERIFF THINKS JOHNSON WAS!

MIXED UP IN THE HOLDUP! HE SAYS NOBODY ELSE COULD GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO BILL, LESS IT WAS A FRIEND!



ANYWAYS, IT'S A TERRIBLE THING!
THREE MEN DEAD, ONE MISSIN'
THE KILLERS SKEDADDLED WITHOUT
A TRACE... THE RODEO OUT A FAT
HUNK OF RECEIPTS... TODAY SHORE
WAS A BLACK DAY FOR THIS TOWN!



SUDDENLY, AS THE FERRY REACHES THE MIDDLE
OF GERMAN'S CREEK...



I-I-V E GOT TO FREE THEM!!!



(GASP!)... THERE'S
NOBODY ON IT!
N-NO DRIVER!!

THOSE HORSES...
(GASP!) T-THEY'LL
BE DRAGGED DOWN
WITH THE WAGON!
THEY'LL DROWN!!



G-GRAMPS!... (GASP!)...
I'M TAKING THEM A-
SHORE!! I'LL MEET YOU
ON THE OTHER SIDE!!

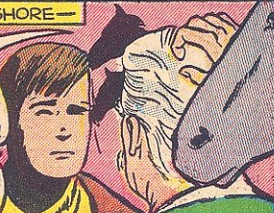
OKAY, RED FIRE!!
...JEST KEEP
OUTA THE FER-
RY LANE!!



SHORTLY AFTER, ASHORE--

WHAT I DON'T GIT
RED FIRE IS WHAT
HAPPENED TO THE
DRIVER! WHERED
HE DISAPPEAR TO?!
HOW COME HE AIN'T
TURNED UP TO
CLAIM HIS HOSSES?!

MAYBE HE DOESN'T
WANT TO CLAIM 'EM!
MAYBE HE WANTED
THE WAGON TO SINK!



BUT THET DON'T
MAKE SENSE!
WHAT HAS ANY
HONBRE TO
GAIN BY LOSIN'
HIS WAGON?!

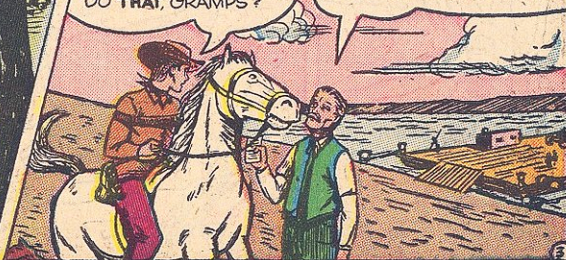
THAT'S THE MYSTERY,
GRAMPS! THAT WAGON
COULDN'T HAVE GONE
OVER BY ACCIDENT--
IF THE OWNER TURNS
UP LET ME KNOW,
GRAMPS, IN THE MEAN-
TIME, I'LL STABLE
HIS HORSES!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING...

I HEAR THE TOWN
WANTS YOU TO FIND
OUT IF THE SUNKEN
WAGON IS A DERELICT--
HOW'RE YOU GOING TO
DO THAT, GRAMPS?

I GOTTA GIT SOME-
ONE TO DIVE DOWN
AN' SEE, BUT THET AIN'T
WHAT'S BOTHERIN' ME,
RED FIRE, TAKE A LOOK
AT THIS MESSAGE I JUST GOT.





GRAMPS! SMALL TROUBLE!
TROUBLE AS DEEP AS THE WATER
THAT WAGON IS LYING IN! LET ME
SEE THIS BONES CHARACTER IN
YOUR PLACE, I'LL TELL
HIM I'M DOING THE
DIVING!

Ferrymen!
If you want to
earn \$100 for
nothing, ask for
Bones at the
Coronado Saloon
at 10:00 A.M. be-
fore you go diving.



SHORTLY AFTER AT THE CORONADO SALOON —

DON'T TELL ME, KID, YORE THE FERRYMAN?

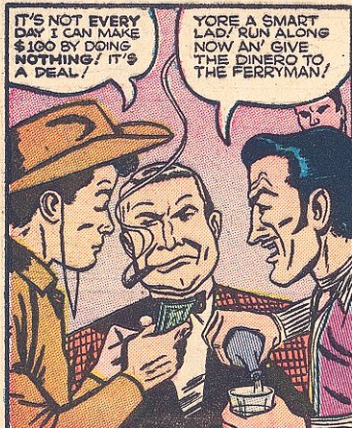
NO, I'M DIVING FOR HIM, WHICH ONE OF YOU IS BONES?

ME IT'S LIKE THIS, KID— WE DON'T WANT THAT WAGON RAISED, WE WANT IT ON THE BOTTOM— IN THE MUD.



WHY?

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GIVIN' YOU A HUNDRED BUCKS! DON'T DIVE... AN' NO QUESTIONS ASKED! JUST WRITE OUT A REPORT THAT THE WAGON IS LODGED IN MUD AN' AIN'T WORTH SALVAGIN'!



IT'S NOT EVERY DAY I CAN MAKE \$100 BY DOING NOTHING! IT'S A DEAL!

YORE A SMART LAD, RUN ALONG NOW AN' GIVE THE DINERO TO THE FERRYMAN!



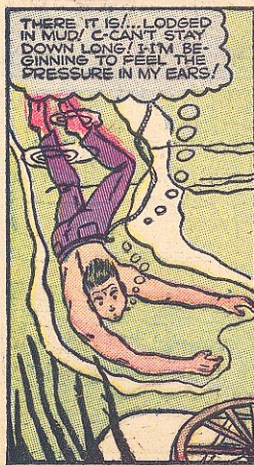
I'M MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT WAGON DIDN'T GO OVER BY ACCIDENT. IF HOMBRES LIKE BONES DON'T WANT IT RAISED, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN IT THEY'D RATHER KEEP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CREEK!



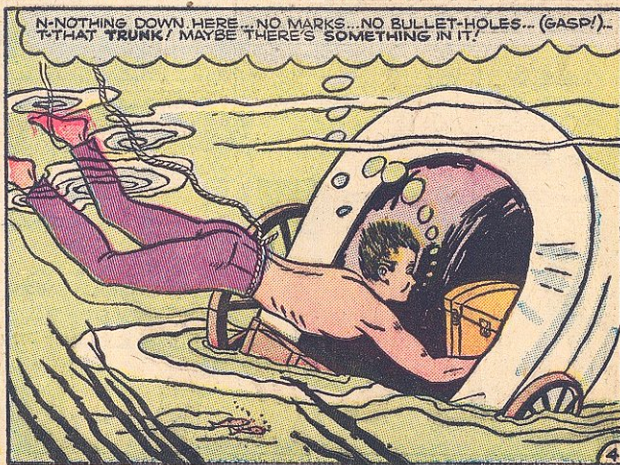
LATER THAT MORNING, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CREEK...

BE CAREFUL, RED FIRE! IF IT'S A DEEP DIVE, COME RIGHT UP! WE GOT ENOUGH TROUBLE WITHOUT SOMETHIN' HAPPENIN' TO YOU!

DON'T WORRY, GRAMPS! I JUST WANT A LOOK INSIDE THAT WAGON! IF I RUN INTO TROUBLE, I'LL YANK ON THE ROPE AND YOU PULL ME UP!



THERE IT IS!... LODGED IN MUD! C-CAN'T STAY DOWN LONG! I'M BE-GINNING TO FEEL THE PRESSURE IN MY EARS!



N-NOTHING DOWN HERE... NO MARKS... NO BULLET-HOLES... (GASP!)... T-THAT TRUNK! MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT!



G-CAN'T BUDGE IT! (GASP) IT'S TOO HEAVY... I CAN'T DO ANYTHING (GASP!) ...WITH IT NOW! M-MY LUNGS ARE BURSTING... I'VE GOT TO SIGN GRAMPS.

SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE DOCK...

HEY, YUH! I TOLD YUH NOT TO DIVE! I GAVE YOU A HUNDRED BUCKS YOU SHOULDN'T DIVE! BUT I WATCHED YUH! YUH DOVE!!

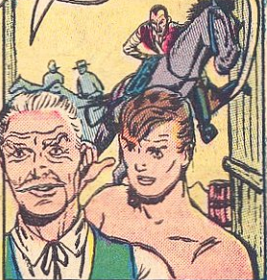
WE HAD TO. GRAMPS COULDN'T LOSE HIS JOB FOR A MEASLY \$100. THE TOWN WOULD BE ON HIS NECK IF THE WAGON TURNED OUT TO BE A DERELICT. BUT YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WE'RE RECOMMENDING THAT THE WAGON BE LEFT THERE!



WHY DIDN'T YUH SAY SO, I HAD YUH GUYS WRONG, I THOUGHT YUH WERE DOUBLE-CROSSIN' ME!

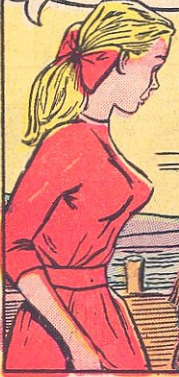
NOW DO YOU SMELL A RAT ABOUT THAT WAGON, GRAMPS?

AN' HOW! WE'LL RAISE THAT TRUNK TONIGHT, WHEN THEY CAINT SEE US!



THAT AFTERNOON, AS RED FIRE AND GRAMPS CONSTRUCT A CRUDE WINCH...

I-I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU... BUT I MUST! MY NAME IS JANE JOHNSON. I WORK IN THE RODEO.



I REMEMBER YOU, TRICK RIDING... ISN'T YOUR BROTHER? I MEAN—HE'S DISAPPEARED HASN'T HE? JUST AFTER THE ROBBERY...

YES, BUT YOU MUSTN'T THINK AS THE SHERIFF DOES... THAT ED IS MIXED UP IN THE HOLDUP! HE COULDN'T BE! NOT ED! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM EVERYWHERE! ONLY ONE PERSON SAW HIM A STABLE-OOWNER! HE SOLD A WAGON AND TEAM TO ED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON!



YES. THERE WAS A THIN MAN WITH HIM WHEN ED BOUGHT THE WAGON...



A THIN MAN? UGLY, MUSTACHED, WITH LONG SPANISH SIDEBURNS?

YES, THAT'S HIM! HAVE YOU SEEN HIM OR MY BROTHER? I HEARD A WAGON WENT OFF THE FERRY LAST NIGHT! I THOUGHT POSSIBLY...MAYBE...DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I'VE GOT TO TRACK DOWN EVERY CLUE!

I UNDERSTAND MISS JOHNSON. GIVE ME THE NAME OF THAT STABLE-OOWNER. I WANT TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT THAT WAGON LOOKED LIKE AND WHAT WAS INSIDE IT!



LATER, AT LOGAN'S LIVERY...

IF THE SKINNY ONE IS REALLY BONES TAGGERT. HE'S ONE OF THE STONEFACE SAM ELTON GANG. STONEFACE SAM HAS A BLOODY FINGER DIPPED IN ANY CRIME YOU CAN NAME AN' SOME YOU CAN'T!

HMM... THIS MYSTERY'S GETTING DEEPER EVERY MINUTE... AS DEEP AS THAT WAGON AT THE BOTTOM OF GERMAN'S CREEK!



BUT AS RED FIRE RETURNS TO GRAMP'S SHACK NEAR THE DOCK...

SURPRISED TO SEE ME, KID? DON'T BE, I GOT ANOTHER DEAL COOKIN'. I'LL GIVE YUH ANOTHER \$100 TO RAISE SOMETHIN' INSIDE THE WAGON? A TRUNK?



YUH WON'T, KID/ LUKE! BRING OUR PRISONERS IN!

I TOLD 'EM WE COULDN'T RAISE THE TRUNK, RED FIRE! THAT IT WAS THE SHERIFF'S JOB TO DO THAT!



THAT NIGHT NEAR THE BOTTOM OF BERMAN'S CREEK...



MOMENTS LATER, AS BONES ROWS OFF WITH HIS TWO CAPTIVES...

WE'LL BE WAITIN' AT BIG ROCK! IF YUH DON'T SHOW UP IN A HALF HOUR, SAM, NOBODY'LL EVER SEE THESE TWO ALIVE AGAIN!

HEAR THAT, KID? THIS TOWNS GONNA SUDDENLY LOSE THREE CITIZENS, INCLUDIN' YOU, IF THAT TRUNK DON'T COME UP FRONTO!— START DIVIN'!!



IF I COME UP WITH THAT TRUNK, I'M A DEAD DUCK! I'VE GOT TO FIGHT MY WAY OUT OF THIS TRAP! I'LL PRETEND I'VE GOT A CRAMP...



HEY! WHAT'S THE MATTER?!... WHAT'RE YOU COMIN' UP NOW FOR?

I-I GOT A CRAMP STONE-FACE!!... ((GASP!)) ...I-IT'S DOUBLING ME UP... ((GASP!))... G-GIVE ME A HAND...



WEEEE

((GASP!))... HE WAS FAKIN'!

OKAY! NOW YOU GET THE TRUNK!!...



YUH DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSIN'—! ((GASP!))...

YIEOOWW



YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF, STONEFACE!!

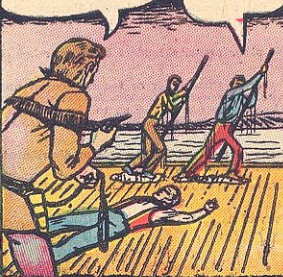
AAAAIIIIII

BANG BANG

MINUTES LATER, AS THE FERRY NEARS LAND—

WHEN WE REACH THE DOCK, YOU'LL TURN YOUR BACKS TO ME! THEN WITH YOU SAFELY TIED UP, I'LL KEEP STONEFACE'S APPOINTMENT WITH BONES... MINUS THE TRUNK!!

STONEFACE WAS A FOOL! HE SHOULD'VE PLUGGED YUH WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE!!



TEN MINUTES LATER... AT BIG ROCK...

ALL RIGHT, BONES. THROW 'EM UP!...

((GASP!))... I-IT'S THE KID... HE GOT AWAY FROM STONEFACE!!... FOR GOSH SAKES... PLUS HIM!!...



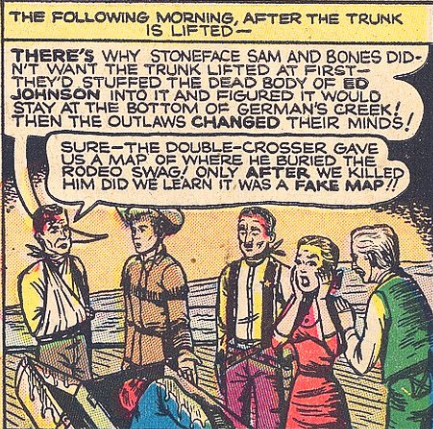


THANK HEAVEN YOUR AIM IS AS BAD AS YOUR INTENTIONS, BONES!

AARRGG

BAWG

LEEEETEE



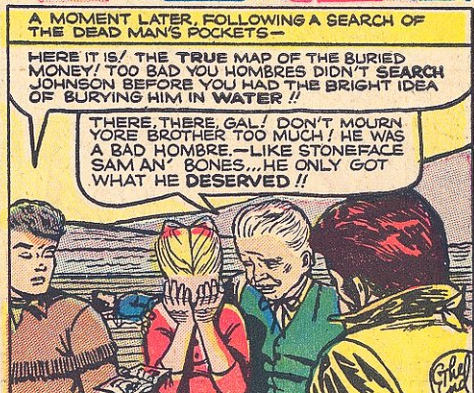
THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AFTER THE TRUNK IS LIFTED—

THERE'S WHY STONEFACE SAM AND BONES DIDN'T WANT THE TRUNK LIFTED AT FIRST— THEY'D STUFFED THE DEAD BODY OF ED JOHNSON INTO IT AND FIGURED IT WOULD STAY AT THE BOTTOM OF GERMAN'S CREEK! THEN THE OUTLAWS CHANGED THEIR MINDS!

SURE—THE DOUBLE-CROSSER GAVE US A MAP OF WHERE HE BURIED THE RODEO SWAG! ONLY AFTER WE KILLED HIM DID WE LEARN IT WAS A FAKE MAP!!



STONEFACE FIGURED JOHNSON HAD THE REAL MAP ON HIM. ONLY THE MAP WAS BURIED IN THE TRUNK WITH JOHNSON! THAT'S WHY BONES ASKED YUH TO RAISE THE TRUNK! WE WANTED THAT MAP!



A MOMENT LATER, FOLLOWING A SEARCH OF THE DEAD MAN'S POCKETS—

HERE IT IS! THE TRUE MAP OF THE BURIED MONEY! TOO BAD YOU HOMBRES DIDN'T SEARCH JOHNSON BEFORE YOU HAD THE BRIGHT IDEA OF BURYING HIM IN WATER!!

THERE, THERE, GAL! DON'T MOURN YORE BROTHER TOO MUCH! HE WAS A BAD HOMBRE—LIKE STONEFACE SAM AN' BONES,—HE ONLY GOT WHAT HE DESERVED!!

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 8, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 OF BLACK DIAMOND WESTERN, published bi-monthly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1954.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher: Lev Gleason Publications, Inc., 114 E. 32nd Street, New York 16, N. Y. Editor: Leverett S. Gleason, 73 Park Drive, Chappaqua, N. Y. Managing Editor: None. Business Manager: Thomas F. O'Brien, 109-48 211th Street, Bellerose 3, L. I.

2. The owner is: (if owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.) Lev Gleason Publications, Inc., 114 E. 32nd Street, New York 16, N. Y. Leverett S. Gleason, 73 Park Drive, Chappaqua, N. Y. Morton Rosenthal, Riverside Memorial Chapel, 76th St. & Amsterdam Avenue, New York 23, N. Y. Rosalind Rosenthal, King Street, Chappaqua, N. Y. Judy Rosenthal, King Street, Chappaqua, N. Y. Jane Rosenthal, King Street, Chappaqua, N. Y. Pat Rosenthal, 101 Central Park West, New York 23, N. Y. Carol L. Rosenthal, 101 Central Park West, New York 23, N. Y. Ellen J. Rosenthal, 101 Central Park West, New York 23, N. Y. Peter Rosenthal, 101 Central Park West, New York 23, N. Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief, as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was:

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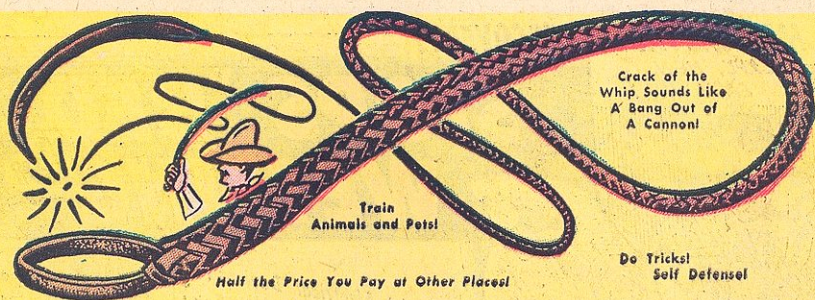
THOMAS F. O'BRIEN, Business Mgr.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of August, 1954,

(Seal)

MANUEL LIEBLICH

(My commission expires March 30, 1956)



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A Bang Out of
A Cannon!

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Genuine
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Big Bull Whip

Used by Trainers & Cowboys! Packs a Terrific Wallop!

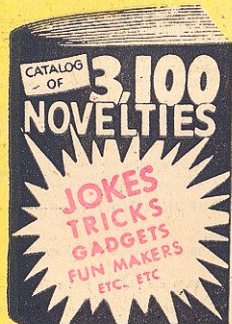
Slip your hand through the loop, let the whip fit naturally between your thumb and fingers, draw it back and LET IT LOOSE! This BIG, HEAVY, RAWHIDE LEATHER WHIP snakes forward hard and fast until the tongue on the end cracks out with a loud snap. You hold it loosely, letting the thumb and fingers control it. The loop on handle keeps it securely to your hand. You'll be amazed how easily you can make it snap where and when you want with just a little practise. Like handling a casting rod. Excellent for training animals or pets.

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CASE NO. 2. Normal boy, history of BED-WETTING since infancy. Child had no organic defect. Various cures failed. Put on DRY-TABS formula regime. After a month, habit suddenly stopped.



CASE NO. 3. Male, aged 23 years. BED-WETTING since birth. Many forms of treatment failed. Unable to accept invitation to sleep out overnight. Recently married, and embarrassed by habit. After formula taken, wet bed the first two nights but never since that time.

CASE NO. 4. Girl, aged 6 years. Wet bed since infancy. Nervous, irritable. DRY-TABS formula administered for regular period. BED-WETTING stopped almost immediately. Slight relapse. Formula administered again. Child responded immediately once more, and history reveals no further relapse.



CASE NO. 5. Man, 42 years old, wet "heavily." Medication started. Wet during second week and continued to wet when medication was withdrawn for following week. Restarted after rest period, and after five-day treatment seemed to retain control of bladder function.

CASE NO. 6. Woman, 76 years old. DRY-TABS formula administered for 6 days. Improvement, upon withdrawal of medication, improvement remained. Combined gradual return of control. One year without formula and control is adequate.



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